



# The County Seat

News from the Leesburg District

July 2002

From Mark Herring  
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

**Welcome! *The County Seat: News from the Leesburg District* is an electronic newsletter to update you on recent events related to the Loudoun County Government and the actions of the Board of Supervisors, especially as they affect residents in the Leesburg District. I am hopeful *The County Seat* will help you stay informed about your County government and improve communications with me as your elected representative on the Board. I invite you to read the updates in this issue and welcome your comments and opinions.**

*Mark Herring*

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## Status of the Comprehensive Plan/Zoning Ordinance

On July 23, 2001, the Board of Supervisors approved the County's Revised Comprehensive Plan to better control growth and development in Loudoun County over the next 20 years. Among other things, the Revised Plan reduces the potential number of new homes that could be built in Loudoun by more than 83,000, protects the character of the rural area, preserves more open space, and lays the framework for tighter environmental controls over development to protect streams, air quality and other natural areas of our County.

In January of this year, the Board hired Clarion Associates, a consulting firm of zoning and land planning experts, to draft zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments that will implement the policies of the Revised Plan. The zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments are essential because while the Revised Plan is a guide for future development, by law it is the zoning and subdivision ordinances which developers must comply with when developing land.

The Board is working hard on the amendments, holding joint work sessions with the planning commission and receiving input from citizen focus groups. These focus groups are comprised of representatives from a wide variety of organizations and serve in an advisory capacity to the Board.

The use of focus groups is just one part of the public participation process. Other elements of the process include public overview sessions with the Board and the Planning Commission, presentations about the project to be held in different areas of the county, the use of an e-mail distribution list to keep interested parties updated on the project, and public hearings.

The Planning Commissions public hearing is tentatively scheduled for August 14th and 17th. Information regarding the latest Zoning Ordinance Revision and Remapping along with focus groups news, can be found on the Loudoun County Government Website at: <http://www.loudoun.gov/compplan/remap.htm>.

## **Annexation Update**

Last July, a group of landowners southeast of Leesburg filed a formal petition with the State of Virginia's Commission on Local Government to have their properties annexed into the Town. Since then, the Town of Leesburg has floated various annexation proposals of its own. On March 14, 2002, the Town of Leesburg filed its own annexation petition with the Commission on Local Government. Those filings required the County to file a formal response with the Commission, which was done on June 14th.

The Board of Supervisors position on annexation has been consistent, namely that annexation is not in the best interest of the citizens, ample land exists already for future commercial/ industrial development within the Town, and annexation at this time could circumvent the County's Revised General Plan and result in haphazard development. The County has called upon the Town to halt annexation plans and work together in a joint planning effort for the future. The Board has insisted that any annexation discussions be held in the open with the public and press invited to attend and that public comment should be considered.

The Commission has scheduled a hearing on the petitions in Leesburg for July 29th - 31st. The Commission will first take a bus tour of the Leesburg area. Then, the landowners, Town and County, will give their opening statements and examine and cross-examine witnesses. The Commission is expected to allow the public to comment during one of the evenings of the hearing, most likely the first night. I encourage you to attend and speak when public comment is allowed. Information regarding the location and times will be made available soon.

## **Loudoun County Public Schools**

### **New Schools for Leesburg**

Loudoun County will see the opening of 5 new public schools this Fall, including Heritage High School in Leesburg, located near Simpson Middle School on Evergreen Mill Road. Leesburg will also see the opening of a new elementary school in August 2003 and a new middle school in August 2004, both located at the O'Connor property, off North King Street on Dry Hollow Road adjacent to Exeter. Construction of the elementary school is expected to begin in August.

A public hearing was held on June 12th with residents who live near the site of the new elementary school, to discuss concerns regarding entrances into the school and buffers between the school and homes in the area. A public hearing concerning boundary issues will be held on Tuesday, October 15th at 6:30pm at Harper Park Middle School. For information about upcoming community input meetings for these new Leesburg schools and other schools in the area, please go to the LCPS Department of Planning and Legislative Services website at: <http://www.loudoun.k12.va.us/planning/calendar.htm>, or email at: [lcpsplan@loudoun.k12.va.us](mailto:lcpsplan@loudoun.k12.va.us), or by phone at 703-771-6436.

### **Budget**

The Board of Supervisors recently met with the School Board to discuss current issues regarding LCPS. We are working proactively with the School Board to help them meet the needs of the growing student population and at the same time maintain a reasonable tax rate for our residents. The Board of Supervisors has increased local tax funding for public schools by 90% over the past 3 years. Schools are now over 68% of the County budget.



*John W. Tolbert, Jr. Elementary  
Opened Fall of 2001*



## Courthouse Construction

Last year, in consultation with some of the judges and other interested citizens, I brought forward a proposal to establish a Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force to provide a long-term and unified vision for the court grounds. Upon the completion of the building construction in Spring 2003, restoration of the lawn will begin, so that our citizens can better enjoy this significant historic open space in the heart of downtown Leesburg. The Court Lawn has served as a public gathering place for over 250 years, before the site was designated for court uses in 1757.

The task force is now working with a consultant to develop a long-term master plan for the court grounds. For more information contact Elizabeth Wheeler at phone 703-777-0251 or email: EWHEELER@co.loudoun.va.us.

## Transportation Funding

Shortly after taking office, Governor Mark R. Warner had his staff review the Virginia Department of Transportation's 6-year road funding plan. The staff found many of the costs of projects and plans grossly underestimated and transportation projects totally mismanaged with major cost over runs. "Let us be very clear what all of this is about; when the Commonwealth of Virginia promises to build a road in a community, we ought to keep our promise. If we can't then we should never place a project on the Six-Year Plan," said Governor Warner. As a result, the construction program will be reduced by more than 20%, resulting in a revised funding allocation for Loudoun.



I was present at the Board's Transportation Committee Meeting when the new allocations were released and funding for projects in Loudoun have indeed been cut. The Board is now considering funding and allocation priorities. I am working with the residents of Tavistock Farms, Beauregard Estates, and Kincaid Forest to reprioritize road project funding, so that Sycolin Road improvements be completed to Belmont Ridge Road (Route 659) within the next 4 years. This will provide alternate access to the Greenway. The County is coordinating efforts with the Town, which is considering various ideas about Battlefield Parkway, the Greenway and the Sycolin flyover. A public hearing on the new plan will be held on July 2nd at 6:30pm in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room at the County Government Center. The Board probably will make a final decision on July the 15th, so if you miss the public hearing, you still have time to comment. If you would like more information about the plan, please contact the County's Office of Transportation Services at 703-737-8624.

Also, Leesburg residents should be aware that the sales tax referendum package includes \$100 million identified for Route 7 improvements from Algonkian Parkway to Purcellville. If the referendum passes, the County and Town would work with the regional authority to prioritize where along Route 7 those funds would be spent. While there would be competition from other projects, projects such as the Leesburg Bypass and Sycolin flyover could be considered.

Just as a note, for road projects located within in the Town of Leesburg, VDOT works directly with the Town. For road projects outside of the Town, VDOT works directly with the County. And the Town and County are coordinate those efforts with each other.

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*I would like to hear from you! For opinion or comment, please contact:*

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